

When it opened its doors in 1972, FIU had an enrollment of 6,000 students. Today, with 13 schools and colleges, FIU has grown to over 28,000 students from all 50 States and 120 countries. As a major center of international education, FIU prides itself on the cultural and ethnic diversity of its students and faculty. It is, indeed, as many of its faculty and students like to say, "a gateway of the Americas."

FIU's College of Engineering and Design bears witness to the university's overall success. Under Dean Gordon R. Hopkins, the college of engineering has earned international recognition for its research programs, drawing scholars from all over the world. Similarly, in the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Dario Moreno, associate professor of political science, helped create a Ph.D. program in this discipline which works in conjunction with the university's renowned Latin American and Caribbean Center [LACC] and the Cuban Research Institute [CRI] to produce first-rate research in these areas of such great interest to our region.

The people of the 21st Congressional District are proud to claim Florida International University as our own. We look forward to the university's bright future of intellectual achievement built upon a foundation of integrity, creativity, and openness to the exploration of new ideas.

THERE'S TOO MUCH TO LOSE

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 10, 1997

Mr. ADAM SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago this House passed a good foreign operations bill, a bill which was structured to help ensure stability, prosperity, equality, and peace to our neighbors and allies around the world. But on that very same day, we witnessed an outrageous and cowardly act of terrorism, a triple bombing that shook the city of Jerusalem. And we were reminded that there are those who do not want peace, people who would destroy and tear down rather than resolving differences through negotiation and compromise.

Such actions are completely intolerable, and so I stand here today to reiterate what Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has already stated, that the United States expects a "100 percent effort" by the Palestinian Authority to stop militants from using areas under Palestinian self-rule as a springboard for attacks on Israel. On this issue there can be no compromise. A serious discussion of peace can not take place while terrorists are receiving nods and winks by the negotiators who are sitting at the bargaining tables.

And let us not confuse the issue, bombs are not the same as bulldozers. Recently, many papers have printed that this new wave of bombings is the result of controversial housing policies. While the Middle East peace process has had to overcome many obstacles, and will certainly have to continue to overcome many more, we can not begin to compare the actions of terrorists to the building policies of a government. There is no moral equivalency.

So as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright begins her visit to the Middle East today, I call

upon all the parties involved to bring their issues to the bargaining table. The terrorists are waging war, and it is a war on peace. As difficult as it may be, we must find a compromise because we cannot let the terrorists win. There is much too much to lose.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 10, 1997

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, September 10, 1997 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

REFORMING THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE SYSTEM

The hearings in Congress have now built a powerful case for fundamental changes in the way we finance our political campaigns in America. They have uncovered negligence by both political parties, with the abuses unearthed going back several elections. These parties were desperate for campaign dollars. They did not take care to look at the origin of the dollars, but simply encouraged their flow to the party coffers. There has been a lot of partisan jockeying in Washington, each party trying to blame the other, and the result, at least so far, has been that Congress has done nothing. If that pattern continues, it would be a tragedy for the American political system.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

Americans may not understand the details or even the basics of the campaign finance system. But they are clearly troubled by the role that money plays in the American political system. They believe that money has an excessive influence on government policy and that elected officials who solicit and accept political contributions while making policy decisions are under a conflict of interest.

They understand that the search for money distracts elected officials from the jobs they are elected to do, and that money often buys access for one group while denying another group a fair opportunity to influence the process. They appreciate that the well-to-do and powerful special interest groups have access to Members of Congress that they do not have.

They understand that the problem is systemic and that it is not associated with a single party or a single elected official. It affects all of them. The public clearly understands that the present system of campaign finance does not serve them well. They overwhelmingly want reform, and they want it now.

"SOFT" MONEY

The campaign finance hearings have raised serious concerns about foreign fundraising, but I do not think the problems are limited to that. A large number of people and groups were able to abuse the current laws, simply because those laws invite abuse. The biggest abuse is the so-called "soft money" that flowed in huge amounts to both political parties during 1996 from American donors. Under current law, both foreign and American money from wealthy individuals and corporations can be given in unlimited amounts to the parties as opposed to individual candidates. Although these funds are supposed to be for party-building purposes, they are easily diverted to individual campaigns. What happened in 1996 was that the whole system simply spun out of control as both parties aggressively sought soft money.

Soft money has become the key source of funding for political campaigns. It amounts to large-scale, unregulated donations. I do not think prohibiting soft money will solve all the problems of campaign finance, but it is certainly an essential part of a meaningful reform package.

IMPORTANCE OF LEGISLATION

I believe it is simply time for Congress to legislate. We do not need a lot of additional information or documentation about the ease with which money has flowed into campaigns or the vigor and ingenuity with which candidates have sought the money from whatever source. The investigating committees are correct in trying to get to the bottom of the many questions that have been raised by the investigations, and the possibility of bringing some criminal charges should be pursued by the Justice Department. The country deserves a full accounting of how the political system got corrupted in 1996, and those investigations should be done in as bipartisan a way as possible. But before Congress goes home in 1997, we should enact a tough campaign finance reform law curbing the role of money in campaigns. What is needed now is legislation, not more data, not more information.

At this point, I think Congress should promptly ban soft money. That would do much to slow the flood of campaign money and alleviate the worst problems in campaign finance. Disclosure rules should be broadened to ensure that voters know who is responsible for the accuracy and fairness of campaign advertising and also know who makes all the contributions and how much they are. Even the most minute contributions and expenditures should be revealed before election day.

And no reform is worth anything unless it has effective enforcement. The Federal Election Commission has to be strengthened with strong, independent-minded commissioners, and with a more adequate budget. Penalties should be strengthened for violators. Further reforms will undoubtedly be necessary. But these should not delay action on those measures that can pass now.

It is important to note that the money-raising process goes on even as politicians talk about campaign finance reform. They are vigorously raising money under the old system, including soft money. Already in 1997 about 2½ times as much has been raised as at the same point in the election cycle four years ago.

Time is of the essence with the congressional year concluding and congressional elections coming up next year. Each day that the elections come closer, the passage of campaign finance reform becomes more difficult.

CONCLUSION

Almost every week now we learn more about the selling of government. Political offices from the White House down are being demeaned, if not corrupted. There seems to be a "For Sale" sign on government, and that includes Congress and the Executive Branch. We simply must have reform, and that especially means imposing limits on the giving and receiving of soft money. I see the potential for the current system, if it continues its present pattern, to do serious harm to our system of government.

Now is the time for Congress to act. The campaign finance issues are very well known to every Member. We deal with them every day. I believe we simply have to set aside the efforts to gain or maintain a partisan advantage. We have to focus now on the integrity of our national government. That integrity demands that we have honest, bipartisan campaign finance reform.